

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 14671 271659Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ACDA-19 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 TRSE-00

NIC-01 DRC-01 SAM-01 CU-05 EB-11 CEA-02 STR-08 CIEP-03

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14671

E.O. 11652: GDS

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 14671 271659Z

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER TRENDS

1. SUMMARY. SEPTEMBER WAS A FAIRLY QUIET MONTH; THERE WERE NO APPRECIABLE SHIFTS IN SOVIET POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET DIPLOMACY DURING SEPTEMBER HAS BEEN UNTYPICALLY INACTIVE. WHILE THE USSR HAS ENTERTAINED THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT, THE IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER, AND THE SOUTH YEMEN PRIME MINISTER -- AND HAS INCHED CLOSER TO SUPPORT FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE AND HINTED AT A POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL -- NO MAJOR SOVIET DEPARTURES ON THE MIDDLE EAST ARE DISCERNIBLE. IN THE REOPENED CSCE TALKS THE SOVIETS HAVE OFFERED NO SIGNS OF ANY NEW FLEXIBILITY. TO KEEP A HAND IN ON CYPRUS, SOVIET CHINA TROUBLE SHOOTER ILICHEV VISITED ANKARA, ATHENS, AND NICOSIA, BUT HE APPARENTLY SAID NOTHING NEW AND ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE. THERE WERE ONLY THREE LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS OF ANY FOREIGN POLICY SUBSTANCE ALL MONTH (POD-GORNY'S SPEECH IN SOFIA, GROMYKO'S UNGA ADDRESS, AND BREZHNEV'S TOAST AT THE KADAR DINNER), AND NONE OF THEM BROKE ANY NEW GROUND.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SPECIFIC IMPERATIVES OF THE ISSUES IN QUESTION ARE SUFFICIENT TO EXPLAIN THE HOLDING PATTERN WHICH SOVIET POLICY APPEARS TO BE IN. UNTIL THE ARAB SUMMIT IN OCTOBER, THERE SEEMS LITTLE OF SIGNIFICANCE THAT MOSCOW CAN DO IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IN CSCE IT WOULD SEEM LOGICAL FOR THE SOVIETS TO HANG TOUGH, IN HOPES THAT A COMBINATION OF NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE WEST, U.S. PRESSURE ON ITS ALLIES, AND MAYBE JUST THE PASSAGE OF TIME WILL PRODUCE SOME NEW WESTERN FLEXIBILITY. AND ON CYPRUS, WHILE THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKE MORE OF THE ACTION, THEY HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN BALANCING THEIR RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND GREECE; IN ANY CASE, DESPITE THEIR SIDELINE POSITION, THINGS ARE NOT GOING BADLY FOR THEM. SOVIET SOURCES HAVE HINTED TO AT LEAST ONE U.S. CORRESPONDENT THAT THE QUIET MEANS THAT A MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW IS UNDERWAY. WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGN OF THIS, ALTHOUGH IT IS EASY TO CONJECTURE THAT CAPITALIST ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND NEW GOVERNMENTS IN THE WEST HAVE OCCASIONED A LONGER-THAN-USUAL SOVIET LOOK AT THE PRESENT STATE OF DETENTE.

4. SPECIAL ATTENTION IS UNDOUBTEDLY BEING DEVOTED TO THE FORD
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 14671 271659Z

ADMINISTRATION. GROMYKO'S EMPHASIS ON THE U.S. -SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IN HIS UNGA SPEECH SEPTEMBER 24, AND BREZHNEV'S EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS A DAY LATER, ATTEST TO THE PRIMACY WHICH THE U.S. HOLDS IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS. WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE FULLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT, PARTICULARLY ABOUT HIS APPROACH TO DEFENSE ISSUES. BREZHNEV'S WORDS ON SEPTEMBER 25 HAD A CAUTIONARY RING TO THEM: "WE IN THE SOVIET UNION DO NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE

U.S., BUT..." OUR SOVIET CONTACTS ARE PROBING EARNESTLY FOR INSIGHTS ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF SECRETARIES KISSINGER AND SCHLESINGER, AND U.S. SCHOLARS HERE THIS WEEK FOR A STANFORD RESEARCH INSTITUTE SYMPOSIUM WITH THE USA AND IMEMO INSTITUTES WERE TREATED TO A BARRAGE OF CRITICISM ABOUT THE "SCHLESINGER DOCTRINE" FROM THEIR SOVIET HOSTS. HAVING BEEN REASSURED ABOUT THE CONTINUITY OF THE GENERAL U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, SOVIETS NOW SEEM TO BE TAKING A HARD LOOK AT SPECIFICS. AS PREAVBKAMZFKEF EXPERT VISHNEVSKIY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER, "WE ARE WATCHING YOU."

5. INTERNALLY, THERE IS AN IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN GOING ON. IT HAS A MORE DEFENSIVE CHARACTER THAN LAST YEAR'S VERSION IN ITS EMPHASIS ON THE DANGERS OF BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY, BUT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IT REPRESENTS ANY BASIC CHANGE IN THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD DETENTE. THE MAJOR HAPPENING OF THE MONTH -- THE SUNDAY AFTERNOON ART MASSACRE -- WILL CERTAINLY HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON WESTERN VIEWS OF THE SOVIET UNION, BUT IT IS AN EFFECT THAT CAN HARDLY HAVE BEEN INTENDED BY SOVIET LEADERS. THE APPARENT DECISION TO LET THE ARTISTS GO AHEAD THIS SUNDAY STRENGTHENS OUR BELIEF THAT THE SEPTEMBER 15 BUST-UP WAS PLANNED AT A LEVEL TOO LOW FOR RESPONSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF FOREIGN POLICY CONSEQUENCES. INDEED, IF THIS WEEKEND'S EVENT TAKES PLACE AS PROMISED, IT WILL BE A CONSIDERABLE INDICATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH DETENTE CONSIDERATIONS CAN AFFECT EVEN THE MOST SACROSANCT DOMESTIC SHIBBOLETHS.

6. ONE CONCERN WHICH IS BECOMING A MORE IMMEDIATE PREOCCUPATION FOR THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS THE SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WITH EASTERN EUROPE AND WITH THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. AT A TIME WHEN THE SOVIETS NEED ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET IN MAKING CONCRETE PREPARATIONS FOR A EUROPEAN PARTY CONFERENCE AND A WORLD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 14671 271659Z

CONFERENCE TO FOLLOW, THEY CONTINUE TO HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE MOVEMENT. THE FAILURE TO HOLD A CRIMEAN CONFERENCE IN AUGUST REMAINS UNEXPLAINED, BUT PROBABLY HAS A ROMANIAN CONNECTION. THE PROMISING COURSE OF SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS MAY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED ALONG WITH THE ARRESTING OF THE COMINFORMISTS. THE THORNY QUESTION OF HOW TO VIEW A POSSIBLE ITALIAN COMMUNIST ENTRY INTO A GOVERNING COALITION LOOMS.

7. THERE IS A LOT OF ACTIVITY BUT IT IS HARD TO PIN DOWN. KADAR HAS BEEN HERE TWICE IN LESS THAN TWO MONTHS AND NEMETH ONCE. BILATERAL VISITS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA GO ON DESPITE THE MONTENEGRO AFFAIR, AND THERE SEEMS TO BE A DESIRE ON BOTH SIDES TO KEEP THINGS LOOKING NORMAL ON THE SURFACE. PODGORNYY HAS BEEN IN SOFIA AND KOSYGIN IN BUCHAREST. SCHERBITSKIY IS IN PRAGUE, GROMYKO IS GOING TO WARSAW, AND

BREZHNEV IS PREPARING FOR A MAJOR VIST TO THE GDR. LEADING CUBAN, ARGENTINIAN, AND LEBANESE COMMUNISTS HAVE RECENTLY VISITED THE USSR. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO AN ACTIVE AUTUMN IN COMMUNIST AFFAIRS, BUT NO FIRM DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IS YET FORESEEABLE.

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